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INFO GPM 03 SC 01 RSC 01 USIA 12 H 02 NSC 10 NSAE 00 L 03 INR 07 P 04
CIA 04 DOD 01 SP 02 SS 35 SAH 03 SAL 01 IO 21 AID 30 RSR 01
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6592
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4198
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL 934
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2490

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5633

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. VICTORIOUS SENATE CONTENDERS HAVE AREADY BEGUN MANEUVERING WITH REGARD TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE SENATE, ACCORDING TO NGUYEN GIA HIEN WHOSE LIST 8 CAME IN THIRD IN THE RACE. HIEN SAID THAT E HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY GENERAL TON THAT DINH, WHO WON ON GENERAL TRAN VAN DON'S SUCCESSFUL LIST, TO SUPPORT DON FOR THE PRESIDENCY. HIEN CLAIMS THAT HE DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF AND DID NOT ASK WHAT DON WOULD OFFER IN RETURN.

(2)

2. HIEN STATED THAT HE FAVORS DON FOR THE PRESIDENCY BUT

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MUST SORT OUT HIS "BLOC", WHICH IS THE WAY HE REFERRED TO THE "20 TO 25" CATHOLICS WHO APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN

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ELECTED TO SENATE. A GOOD NUMBER OF THE CATHOLIC SENATORS-ELECT HAVE INDICATED A PREFERENCE FOR NGUYEN VAN HUYEN, RESPECTED CATHOLIC LAWYER WHO HEADED LIST 40, ALTHOUGH, HIEN ADDED, HUYEN HIMSELF HAS NOT YET DECLARED HIS INTENTIONS. HIEN TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE PREFERS DON BECAUSE OF DON'S GRETER PRESTIGE IN THE COUNTRY, HIS DECIDED ABILITY, HUYEN'S POOR HEALTH, AND FACT THAT CATHOLIC SENATE PRESIDENT MIGHT BE TOO MUCH FOR THE COUNTRY TO STAND FOLLOWING ELECTION OF CATHOLIC PRESIDENT AND SENATE WHICH IS DISPROPORTIONATELY CATHOLIC. HIEN SAID THAT HE STILL HAS TO MEET WITH LEADERS OF LISTS 10 AND 21, BUT HOPES TO CONVINCE HUYEN NOT TO COMPETE WITH DON, POSSIBLY BY ARRANGING FOR HUYEN TO BE ELECTED AS VICE-CHAIRMAN IF HE, HIEN, HIMSELF DOES OT WISH TO SEEK THAT POSITION.

3. HIEN DESCRIBED SENATE AS FAIRLY WELL BALANCED: 529 PRO-GOVERNMENT LISTS (HIEN'S OWN #8 AND DON'S #13), TWO LIST IN THE MIDDLE (GENERAL CAO'S #31 AND HUYEN'S #40), AND TWO MORE OR LESS IN OPPOSITION (REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIETS

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#21 AND PHAM BA CAM'S #10). HOWEVER, HIEN BELIVES THAT CATHOLIC BLOC IN SENATE WILL BE ITS MOST COHESIVE ELEMENT, CERTAINLY MORE COHESIVE THAN CATHOLICS IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

4. ON THE SUBJECT OF DZU'S UNEXPECTEDLY GOOD SHOWING, HIEN SAID MAJORELEMENT IN DZU'S RUNNER-UP FINISH WAS HIS EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING A LARGEAMOUNT OF FUNDS. PEASE ISSUE MEANT LITTLE IANYTHING TO MOST VIETNAMESE, HIEN SAID, AND TAN DAI VIETS WERE NOT THAT EFFECTIVE AN ORGANIZATION TO ACCOUNT FOR THE GOOD SHOWING. HIEN ADITTED THAT INITIALLY HE FELT THAT DZU WAS NOT A SERIOUS CONTENDER, BUT AFTER HAVING SEEN DZU AND HIS SUPPORTERS AT WORK IN THE PROVINCES, HE WAS NOT SURPRISED AT THE OUTCOME.

5. AS FOR THE SUCCESS OF TRAN VAN DON'S LIST, HIEN CALLED IT A COMBINATION OF SUPPORT FROM A LARGE NUMBER OF MILITARY WHO GREATLY RESPECT DON, CVT SUPPORT, AND A

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LARGE BAROLL OF UNDETERMINED ORIGIN, ALTHOUGH POSSIBLY FROM THIEU-KY. HIEN FEELS THAT THIEU AND KY ARE BOTH PLEASED WITH DON'S ELECTION AND INDIRECTLY SUPPORTED HIM.

6. ASKED ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE THE INITIAL TASKS OF THE

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NEW GOVERNMENT, HIEN SAID THAT IT MUST FIRST ESABLISH A VIABLE POLITICAL STRUCTURE, BRINGING AS MANY ELEMENTS AS POSSIBLE INTO THE PRO-GVERNMENT SIDE AND ALLLOWING FOR AN EFFECTIVE, BUT RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION. HE ALSO SAID THAT A REVITALIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY AND THE MILITARY IS NECESSARY AND HE SINGLED OUT GENERAL THANG AS A MAN WHO COULD PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THIS.

6. COMMENT: A) DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT CA ALSO HAD DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF CATHOLICS AND CATHOLIC DEPUTIES, WHO CONSCIOUS OF THEIR OVER-REPRESENTATION, AVOIDED COALESCING INTO SINGLE BLOC. ABOUT 15 NORTHERN CATHOLIC DEPUTIES INITIALLY FORMED DEMOCRATIC BLOC BUT IT SOON MERGED WITH CAO DAI, HOA HAO, VNQDD AND SOME OTHER DEPUTIES TO FORM WHAT IS NOW KNOW AS DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE BLOC. APPROXIMATELY 15 TO 20 OTHER CATHOLIC DEPUTIES INCONSPICIOUSLY JOINED OTHER BLOCS OR REMAINED INDEPENDENT. THUS WHILE CATHOLIC DEPUTIES MAY HAVE ON OCCASION COLLABORATED CLOSELY TOGETHER, THEY AVOIDED CONSPICUOUS "BLOC" ACTION. MOREOVER, ON MANY POLITICAL ISSUES CATHOLIC DEPUTIES WERE DIVIDED BY SUCH FACTORS AS REGIONAL ORIGIN, NONRELIGIOUS

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POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS AND DIFFERING PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES.

B) FOREGOING SUGGESTS THAT CATHOLIC IN NEW UPPER HOSE, ALTHOUGH PROPORTINATELY MORE NUMEROUS THAN IN CA, MAY WELL AVOID FORMING CONSPICUOUS COALITION. IT IS EVEN MORE LIKELY THAT OTHERS WILL JOIN HIEN IN WORKING TO

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DISSUADE ANY CATHOLIC FROM RUNNING FOR PRESIDENCY OF UPPER HOUSE IN ORDER AVOID OBVIOUS POLITICAL COMPLICATIONS WHICH COULD RESULT FROM HIS ELCECTION.

GP-3. BUNKER

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